1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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178 but there has been a delegation of his traditional secondary functions. The spread of Government primary education, for example, has produced a literate younger generation able to write - and think - for itself; rediffusion, cinemas, and television have made their presence felt; the Maltese-language press has grown in volume and scope; letters and visits from emigrated Maltese widen horizons rapidly; cheap bus transport puts most of the Malta within easy reach; health and social services have brought improvements; C.A.R.E. (2) and other relief supplies have brought a new external influence; the changing pattern of work with the new limited working day is giving the time for the novel activities made possible by cultural and material advancement. The last 50 years have seen the appearance and spread of the lay religious movements (see Chapter VI C) which have attempted to relieve the Priest of some of the work with which he had previously been able to contend unaided. The Society of Christian Doctrine [575] (M.U.S.E.U.M.), founded in 1909, was the first of these but larger and more comprehensive is Catholic Action whose four groups for men, women, young men, and young women have been established throughout the Islands to provide the modern Maltese parallel to the Village Institute, Youth Club and Church Fellowship of other countries.

178 The rural family was traditionally the economic unit within the village. A 241 century ago, farming in Malta implied the self-sufficiency of the true subsistence 654 peasant rather than the crop- and milk-selling producer of today. The food for the family came very largely from the fields worked by its members, milk from their own goats or sheep and clothing from home-produced cotton and wool.

Money and matters financial now occupy a major part of the thoughts of the Maltese farmer - even of the older generation, illiterate and cut off from more cultural developments. Barter as a means of exchange is breathing its last. Perhaps more than anything else did the 1939-45 war mark the change. During the years of siege and shortage the farmer was able to get prices for produce out of all proportion to anything before or since. With the return of conditions to normal after the war this Golden Age of Maltese farming collapsed but the farmer went on somehow expecting to make the same profits in peace as he had in war. The fact that he has not been able to do this, even with recent Government protective farming programmes of subsidies, guaranteed prices and other artificial inducements, has increased the bitterness which the farmer has come to feel for his lot. For its part, the Government has tried to keep the farming community as contented as possible and at the same time has embarked on attempts at dairy and general farming reforms of methods, varieties, marketing, etc., in an attempt to stop the retreat from the land and from the way of life based on it. The produce of the soil is, after all, Malta's only major locally-based industry. This has seemed to prove to the farmer that *'Gvern'* ought to do all that it has done for the farmer, and a lot more. The Government's recent policy has been to educate the farmer to accept the new ideas and novel methods and techniques and it has attempted to do this through lectures to farmers, programmes on rediffusion, and pamphlets - along with the inducements of subsidies and guarantees. But the limited success of this programme has emphasised the basic problem in farming today which is that the 'Farmer' is now the middle-aged or old man, whose lack of education and experience outside the community of his village makes it most unlikely that he will accept information and advice from those who are patently not *Maltese* farmers and lack the lifetime's association with the alleged idiosyncracies of the Maltese environment.

178 The younger generation, which has benefited from a thorough primary 464 schooling, might have been the individuals to listen to lectures on farming but, 24 and here is the basic problem, as a group the sons and daughters of farmers 56 are desperate to leave the land and even more concerned to rid themselves of what they see as the social inferiority attached to the calling of their fathers. These young people have in fact been educated to an awareness of new possibilities of economic and social life outside farming and also outside the village community which bred them. So many of the younger generation have in fact managed to make the break with the way of life of their fathers that the average age of the Maltese farmer is now higher than only a few years ago, and is still rising (see Section III Introduction).

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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In terms of the social pattern of the rural village, this means that there is a very significant distinction to be made between the older generation of farmers proper and the younger generation whose direct attachment to the land and farming is weaker if not already broken. If one turns to a consideration of the way of life and living standards in the village community this gulf is apparent. Most spectacular perhaps are changes in clothing.

The familiar working garb of the farmer has been the heavy woollen vest, cotton trousers, waistcoat, and cap. Recently, army-surplus shirts, denims, etc., have replaced the locally-made garment, often of home-grown cotton, while the cummerbund is now rare. Sandals are normally worn for walking but not for work. The farmer who works round the clock has never had a 'best suit'. He attends Mass in his working clothes before going to the fields and, on Sundays and holidays, ventures forth as on any other day with the possible addition of a woollen cardigan or more presentable waistcoat. For women, the use of the *faldetta* ribbed hood has declined rapidly in the last 20 years and is now only worn by the older women in the villages and by female members of the M.U.S.E.U.M. movement. The use of black generally by women is declining but most clothes are still made in the home even if from bought material rather than home-produced cotton or wool. The younger generation are not usually content to venture forth dressed in the manner of their parents but insist on making their own appearance as much like that of the average town-dweller among whom they aim to move socially. The white shirt, smart suit, shoes, socks, and well-oiled hair of the young men and the bright dresses, high-heeled shoes, nylons and cosmetics of the village maidens are regarded as the essential uniform of the seeker after the bright lights of Valletta and the towns. The schools have played a part in this with their demands on cleanliness, footwear and dress in the classroom. Occasionally a child goes bare-foot to a village school but no one would think of visiting Valletta shoe-less. The imitation of urban standards of dress is particularly apparent in the sub-urban districts where the farming minority are at pains to 'keep up with the Vellas' in dress - in spite of the expense involved.

Diet in the traditional rural scene depended upon what could be produced by the fields and animals held by any family. The standard soups and stews (such as *minestra* and *brodu*) were consequently largely vegetable. Meat was rarer, fish seasonal and small birds might be added to a stew depending on the results of the hunting or, more correctly, shooting which was and is a popular Sunday and Holiday pastime in the countryside. The diet was rather less 'Italian' than that in Valletta and the towns, with potatoes in place of the various forms of farinaceous paste - spaghetti, macaroni, etc. As in the rest of the Islands before the 1939-45 war, milk was taken fresh from goats and sheep and was not infrequently disease-carrying. Tinned milk is now popular in town and country but consumption of bottled, pasteurised milk is growing. Tea and coffee drinking have to some extent replaced local and home-made wines, especially in the many bars and small cafés which have become the leisure-time resorts of the men of the villages between strolls in the squares and streets. Even here change is evidenced, for the traditional guitar-accompanied *ghana* of the Maltese peasant has given way to *Radio e Televisione Italiana* as the basis of café entertainment.

This very increase in leisure time is significant. The old farmer is content to spend the greater part of every day with his animals or in the fields for they are in fact his hobby as well as his livelihood. Cinemas and bright lights hold no attraction for him; but the young man insists on recreation as he sees it in the towns. The timetable of the farmer varies according to his type of farming. The herdsmen's life is ruled by the routine of feeding and attention demanded by his cows or goats and by the times of milk collection demanded by the Milk Marketing Undertaking. All this means an earlier daily start (sometimes 1 or 2 a.m.) than is usual for the field worker who begins his day with a 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. Mass and then stops for a light breakfast some three hours later. Lunch-time is 11 a.m. or noon and is followed by a *siesta* of some hours, depending on the season and the pressure of work to be completed before the sun goes down and the field-worker shoulders his hoes or his wooden plough and returns home

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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be successful in the field of village politics. From there he can move into national politics.

Traditionally, age was an important determinant of status. Age meant wisdom, experience and position at the head of a large family. The deference accorded to age is preserved in the proverb 'Heed well the words of the elders' (*Kliem ix-xiħ żomm fiħ*). But in a society where teenage sons work as skilled labourers, clerks and teachers while their fathers still farm or dig ditches, and where schoolboys read letters, newspapers and voting instructions to their illiterate parents, the words of the elders are often not heard. The social and cultural gap between the old and the young is wider now than it has been for many generations. Today leadership in the villages is in relatively young hands. Old parish registers support the memories of the present generation of elders that this has not always been the case.

Village sons who are professionals often become presidents of their local band clubs. Very often they no longer live in their native villages. Most marry town-bred girls from professional families who do not wish to leave their urban surroundings and friends to live amongst people they regard as their inferiors in every sense. Though village-born professionals find it convenient for business purposes to live in the town, most lawyers continue to practise in their native villages. But when they continue to reside in their villages, even though their social life and many of their business interests are oriented away from the community, they normally enjoy great prestige. This works to enlarge their professional clientele. These assets can easily be converted into political support, and many village doctors and lawyers have gone successfully into politics.

Dr. Farrugia of Kortin, the town's only lawyer and its leading citizen, is a case in point. A native of Kortin, he is the son of old Manwel, the retired teacher who runs the Good Friday procession. Of a relatively modest background, he married the daughter of the former lawyer in the village, and took over the latter's large practice when he died. Past president of both the football and social clubs, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, he has been president of the band club for many years. He is also a successful politician at the national level.

Frequently the government District Medical Officers are the only professionals resident in the villages in which they work.

795 Another Malta-wide authority is the Church, but the summit of this is scarcely less remote to the farmer than is 'Il-Gvern' for in the normal practice of his religion he leans directly on the local church and priests.

829 To the farmer 'Gvern' is synonomous with control. Illiteracy has, in the past, made it very difficult for him to view authority with anything but suspicion. This has not been made easier by incompetent and condescending elements within officialdom whose actions, if any, have confirmed the doubts of the small farmer striving to provide his family with a living despite the odds against him - of which 'Gvern' was one.

178 Today the picture is changing. It is official policy
654 to "encourage investment and to improve farming methods so as to raise the efficiency of the industry to a level where it can provide a decent livelihood for those engaged in it"[38].

178 The farmers' reactions to efforts on his behalf are
156 particularly important at this crucial stage in the pro-
829 gress of agriculture in the Islands. Essentially his outlook retains much of the traditional reserve and caution of the illiterate peasant, an attitude apparent also in two further contexts, the organization within farming itself (Unions, Co-Operatives, etc.), and the farmers' attitudes towards society in general and rural society in particular.

829 The three aspects of the problem may be re-phrased as
156 (i) the farmer's attitudes to officialdom, espec- the Department of Agriculture, and 'Il-Gvern' generally,

(ii) his attitude towards other farmers and towards the industry as a whole,

(iii) his position as a member of a socially 'low' class within Malta.

[561] Within each of these the present gulf between the younger generation, with a degree of education and emancipation, and the older (including most of the Islands' full-time farmers) produces a further conflict of attitudes and aspirations.

654 THE FARMER AND GOVERNMENT

Official interest in agricultural development has increased very rapidly during the present decade and now includes a wide variety of measures aimed at improving farming by financial support and investment. These have been outlined in Section 2. There has also been an attempt to educate the farmer in better suited techniques and to make him aware of improvements which, it is believed, will increase the profit from his farm or herd. The problem here is seen to be twofold: